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ABSTRACT

A subjective assessment of women's organizations and development in Sri Lanka and Thailand produced specific information about the organizations and suggested ways to improve their development capacities. Personal interviews with nearly 100 organization, government, and agency leaders revealed many similarities between the two countries. In both countries, formal women's organizations such as the Young Women's Christian Association arose from traditional sociocultural orgins and are led by upper middle class urban volunteers. Often united under umbrella institutions, the organizations offer programs to the rural, and sometimes to the urban poor in sewing, health, child care, and handicrafts. Informal organizations such as the Sarvodaya Mother's Clubs and the Good Sheperd Farm Center are usually rural, operating under government auspices, and are often highly successful in family life and agricultural education. Thai organizations are closely tied to the sociopolitical structure, and some, like the Girl Guides, enjoy great success. Their leaders are often good fundraisers and internationally active. On the other hand, Sri Lankan organizations are usually older and poorer. Their leaders generally operate within the country. Leaders in both countries need outside aid to develop training and management resources and to develop projects focusing on agricultural and industrial skills. (SB)

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WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT:

AN ASSESSMENT OF CAPACITIES FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

IN

SRI LANKA AND THAILAND

by

Lael Swinney Stegall

1979

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I. Introduction

Women's organizations have continued to be very important leadership training grounds for women who enter into positions of public responsibility. In the developing world, women's organizations perform another very important function, the organization of development programs which bring vitally needed skills and resources to women who frequently constitute the poorest of the poor.

As development agencies become more serious about their efforts to involve women both as planners and beneficiaries in the development process, women's organizations both formal and informal have become a subject of more interest. Potentially these structures or networks can be very important in delivering resources and supplementing other kinds of development programs. Perdita Huston's recently published book, Third World Women Speak Out repeatedly refers to the importance of women's organizations in the lives of poor and rural women. The facts and feelings for these groups have been eloquently documented. Even more must be known about women's organizations in the developing world so that technical assistance can appropriately strengthen their outreach.

The following review of capacities and need for technical assistance among women's organizations was designed to be a very subjective assessment. Since institutional development is very tied-in to particular personalities, histories of organizations and current attitudes, it was thought that an in-depth look at women's groups, their leadership, networks, interest in development and, use of outside assistance would

provide valuable insights for those concerned with women in development. The assessment was designed to produce specific information on perceptions and programs. It was also meant to suggest ways to assist in the expansion of the development capacities of these groups.

Sri Lanka and Thailand were chosen for the assessment because of two factors: both countries are embarked on major national development programs in which U.S.AID has made a strong commitment; and, secondly, both countries have an extensive network of women's organizations which have their roots in the religious, cultural, and charitable traditions in their societies. Women's organizations in both nations are struggling to be relevant to the changing demands of the times.

Close to a hundred personal interviews provided the data for the assessment. Leaders of all the major women's organizations concerned with development were interviewed. To enhance the accuracy of the assessment, interviews were also held with government officials, members of parliament, journalists, academicians, indigenous and international PVO staff members, AID staff and, experienced WID project people from other foreign aid agencies and international organizations. A basis for regional comparison was also obtained through informal discussions with leaders of women's organizations in India, Indonesia and the Philippines. Lists of the individuals contacted throughout Asia are included in the Appendix of the report.

Every effort was made to spend significant time visiting the project sites of the women's organizations. Conversations with poor women in urban community centers or in village mother's clubs produced revealing evidence about the usefulness of the development programs.

Juxtaposing the attitudes of the educated city women, who usually lead the formal women's groups, with the perception that poor women have about themselves and their own problems was a valuable exercise. Both groups seem equally determined to make their mark in the country's development and, that determination needs to be encouraged.

Hopefully, the recommendations made by this subjective assessment of women's organizations in Sri Lanka and Thailand will assist current AID and PVO administrators in designing assistance programs that will build the capacities of these organizations to function as effective vehicles for develpment.' The interest, compassion and commitment to development shown by the women who participated in this assessment, suggests that we must be among their most ardent advocates.

Lael Stegall, October 31, 1979

WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS: SRI LANKA

Women's organizations have been a part of Sri Lanka society for well over 100 years. Like other countries in Asia, Sri Lanka was colonized by various countries until independence in 1948 and for that reason many of the earlier women's organizations were models of foreign women's associations. The Young Women's Christian Association of Colombo founded in 1852, is typical of that model, but there were many others as well.

Today, there are over 40 women's organizations in Sri Lanka that vary in character from highly organized federations to single purpose religious and cultural affairs groups to very localized networks of housewives and neighbors. These groups have elected officers, constitutions, dues and regular programs. They have their origins in one of the following ways:

1. Religious or cultural origins such as women's organizations associated with the Buddhist, Christian, Muslim, Tamil or Hindu countries;

2. Social service goals which brought in such groups as the Girl Guides and the Lanka Mahila Samiti, groups which are frequently affiliated with the international alliances;

3. Professional organizations: nurse's and teacher's associations the Sri Lanka federation of University Womne. Zonta and Soroptimists, International - women's organizations that have been important networks for the large number of well educated and professionally trained women in SL.

4. Consciousness-raising organizations - While few in number, these groups constitute the more modern organizations that are primarily interested in issues of women's rights and roles. Kantha Handa is the best known in this category.

A good deal of information is known about some 32 of the women's organizations that fall into the preceeding four categories. These groups, all non-governmental in nature are members of the Sri Lanka Women's Conference, an umbrella organization that has been in existence since 1944. An excellent survey of these organizations, their origins, goal statements, administrative set-up, funding sources and current projects is contained in a very recently completed study written by Professor Hema Goonatilake for the Swedish International Development Agency.[1] The report also contains an interesting history of women's organizations in Sri Lanka.

Another category of women's organizations in Sri Lanka that involves large numbers of rural women are the government sponsored Kantha Samitis and the Mother's Clubs or groups of the Buddhist, village re-awakening movement, Sarvodaya. These groups are most often very loosely organized networks of village women.

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1. See A Study of National Women's Organizations in Sri Lanka by Dr. Hema Goonatilake, June, 1979, commissioned by SIDA. Mimeo copy in Appendix. Courtesy of Swedish Charge D'Affairs. Colombo Sri Lanka.

1. Government sponsored rural women's groups: First organized by the Department of Rural Development in the early 50's and again in 1970 and 1975, these Kantha Samitis or women's development centers have been an effort to educate rural women in nutrition, basic health, home gardens, handicrafts, etc. in the context of government programs. While more recent activity has attempted to train rural women in skills that will "integrate women more fully into the development process", these groups are very loosely organized and many suggest, are more politically inspiried networks that are more active on paper than they are in reality.

2. Mother's Clubs: A familiar formula for many rural development programs, Sarvodaya, the very successful and highly acclaimed village development program in SL has used mother's clubs as the "major building block" for village development in 3,000 villages. These clubs serve as child-care centers, training grounds for family life education, leadership development and, sites for income generation projects.

Very few of the non-governmental women's organizations have a development orientation. The programs of the great majority remain exclusively, social, religious, or charitable in a very traditional sense. The following description will focus on those few groups that consider 'women in development', or working with the rural poor, or training or education for the disadvantaged a part of their regular program. However, it is important to know that Sri Lanka is going through a very dramatic resurgence of national interest in development and it is inevitable that more of the women's organizations will become involved in projects that are concerned with women in development. Women's organizations in the formal sense are but one avenue to utilizing women as equal partners in development. Other associations that involve women and their informal networks in the business of development offer equally important connections for women as planners and beneficiaries.

It behooves those involved in technical assistance who share a commitment to women in development to understand the varying character of both kinds of organizations.

I. Formal Women's Organizations: a Profile

I. More formal non-governmental organizations that are currently interested in development include:

The Lanka Mahila Samiti (affiliate Associated Countrywomen of the World)
The Y.W.C.A.
The Sri Lanka Girl Guides Association
The Sri Lanka Women's Conference (Affiliate, International Alliance of Women)
The Sri Lankadara Society
The Young Women's Muslim Association

A. Leadership and Membership

1. The leadership in all but one group is exclusively middle class, upper-income, resident of Colombo and older. (The Young Women's Muslim Association which has its major project in the Maligawatte shanty area of Colombo and its leadership and membership is "grassroots", lower-income and young.)

2. Most of the leaders have been with the organization since its formative stages and are still there. The top leadership is often a "revolving clique" and officers in one organization may well hold offices in another.

3. Leadership roles are voluntary positions filled by well-intentioned, educated, socially prominent women. Most of the leaders work almost full-time in their organizations.

4. The YWCA and Lanka Mahila Samiti, the largest of the above groups have small, paid clerical staffs. Very recently, the YWCA has for the first time hired 3 young women who are field organizers. These women come closest to being the first paid professional staff within these women's organizations.

5. All of the organizations are suffering from a decrease in membership and younger volunteers. Time, energy and money are cited as reasons for the disinterest among younger women in becoming involved in these traditional groups.[1] While several of the groups have statistically large numbers of dues paying members, all in reality are run by small numbers of activists.

6. English is the language of the leadership and the organization. This is also cited as one of the barriers to women under 40 whose education is in Sinhala and Tamil becoming active in these groups.[2]

7. The leadershp seems to be acutely concerned about the drop in membership and all seem anxious to find ways of helping the organization and leadership adjust to the changing roles for women and their part in a developing society.

8. International Women's Year and the national priority for development in Sri Lanka are mentioned by the leadership of these groups as important reasons for their organizations to become more substantilly involved in development programs for poor rural and urban women.

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1. A study of National Women's Organizations in Sri Lanka by H. Godnatilake. p. 16.

2. Ibid. page 18.

9. While there is some articulated "self-consciousness" about city, educated women working with the poor, the leaders feel there is justification for non-governmental efforts. They recognize the need to change the "lady-bountiful" approach of the old days and to try to update their approach to organizational management and problem-solving. There is uncertainty however, about how to do this. The Lanka Mahila ladies speak with pride about a new leader, "a Tamil speaking woman who will do good things for them up North".

10. Inspite of the good connections that most of the leadership have with SL's social and political elite, these women admit to their historic isolation from the public policy arena. They speak with seriousness about the importance of the women's organizations working with the government and, becoming more skillful personally as leaders in dealing with government officials.

11. In response, the Sri Lanka Women's Conference has become more interested in public policy in recent years. While a number of the members of the SLWC have remained passive, the leadership is given credit for having successfully pressured for the creation of the SL Women's Bureau. In addition, they have lobbied for the appointment of women to very specific government commissions and agencies that are involved with women's rights and development.

B. Program Characteristics Among the Formal Women's Organizations.

1. Family life education is the "catch-all" title given to programs that purport to teach women and young girls nutrition, basic health, home gardening, family planning, sewing and leisure-time income production activity. These are considered to be development programs. A few programs actually cover all these areas, most are mainly weekly sessions in cooking and sewing.

2. The classic model for teaching the above is in the classroom or make-shift community center. "Lecturers" loaned by the Dept. of Agriculture give presentations or talks are given by the educated city volunteers who are the leaders of the women's groups.

3. The Family Planning Association of SL (with funds from IPPF) has put funds into five of the women's groups to finance family life education programs as a part of the national family planning scheme. There are two paid nutritionists who visit the project sites. The most attractive and articulate was described as a "city girl" and no way as effective as her colleague, an older woman, Tamil speaker who was plainly dressed and resembled a village woman. FPA officials complain that actual contraceptive information has been put aside in favor of the family life education - one reason some use to explain the "plateau" of the birth-rate in SL family planning programs.

4. Leadership Training, The Lanka Mahila Samiti has been in the forefront among women's groups in the training of village women as voluntary workers in family life education. The training center at Kaduwela, a village on the outskirts of Colombo, trains young women in health and samitation, nutrition, family planning, day-care, handicrafts, home gardening and basic agriculture.

5. Follow-up and evaluation are virtually unknown processes in the development programs run by the women's organizations. Very little is known about what the graduates of the leadership training courses for village women do. Reporting procedures are very vague.

6. While family life education and development programs have traditionally been geared to rural women, the YWCA, SL Women's Conference and, the Girl Guides have begun projects in the shanty areas of Colombo. The Young Women's Muslim Association operates exclusively in the urban slums. There is growing recognition that the problems of poverty are equally as insidious within the urban areas.

7. The development projects undertaken by women's groups are essentially run by volunteer labor - the concept of a professionally paid project director is a very new one. While professional paid direction runs counter to the traditions of the voluntary organizations, there is increasing discussion of its advantages particularly since there are hardly any younger women who are prepared to give the volunteer hours of the older generation.

8. Projects are funded very meagerly through a combination of gifts in kind (solicited donations of space, materials and loans of teachers), modest financial contributions from the membership and, occasional financial support from international PVO's and foreign assistance agencies. While NOVIB and DANIDA have contributed buildings to the YWCA and Lanka Mahila Samiti, most project proposals for outside financial assistance are very small and specific, i.e. a request for 10 sewing machines as opposed to a developed project proposal that would request funding over a three year period for facilities, training, materials and follow-up.

9. Income generation is another top priority for women's groups involved in development. Income-generation activity usually translates into a sewing course or handicraft production program. Little distinction is made between programs that train women to earn additional funds in leisure or nonharvest time and, those that train women in skills that increase real earning power for the family. There was no evidence that any vocational training programs that taught anything but the traditional women's work of lace-making, handicraft production, weaving and dress making.

10. None of the women's groups have developed expertise in marketing or promotion although when asked about the real income earned through handicrafts and lace-making, were quick to say they needed to know more about marketing and promotion.

C. Networks Between Women's Groups in Sri Lanka

1. The Sri Lanka Women's Conference has operated for over 30 years as an umbrella organization for women's groups. All of the major women's groups belong to it including all those that are involved in development programs. While the SLWC has other objectives, its recent leadership has been very commited to furthering the effective role of women's organizations in national development. This purpose has been pursued at both a project and policy level. The SLWC has successfully lobbied for appointments of key women to national development advisory commissions and boards. The organization is also directly engaged in development programming. Currently, SLWC in conjunction with the U.S.Save the Children Federation is conducting a family life education project in a shanty area of Colombo. The director hopes to begin an income generation project that would train urban, poor, women in non-traditional job skills. The SLWC's leadership in policy and field projects has undoubtedly begun to encourage other women's groups within the same direction. While the SLWC has regular monthly meetings in which project information is shared, no joint training projects for leadership as of yet.

2. Since Colombo and the development community is small, many of the leaders do see each other regularly and do exchange information on an informal basis. Turfdom and competition between the women's groups seems less pronounced than in other places. There is an enormous gap however between the urban and rural women, a chasm that is hardly articulated.

3. The activities around International Women's Year and the International Year of the Child have brought women's groups and leaders together that might not normally meet. Both these international events have given credibility and moral support to the programs of local women's organizations.

4. The women's groups that are affliliated with international organizations such as the World YWCA, International Alliance of Women, Associated Country-women of the World, etc. benefit from an international network that encourages information exchange, occasionally funding and attendance at international meetings. The four formal women's groups that are most involved with development activity are affiliates of international networks.

5. The government of Sri Lanka is an active member of the official international governmental organizations and consequently a few officially appointed women are sent to U.N. conferences and gatherings. However, there is complaint that the same women are sent out to these meetings and not very many ever benefit from the association. Because of the austere economy in the country, other women are encouraged to be part of the delegation but are expected to pay their own expenses to international meetings.

6. When queried about the value of international meetings, numbers of women replied that costs made the trip so prohibitive but there was increasing skepticism also about the value of such meetings that usually took place in totally different cultures and get bogged down in international political issues irrelevant to the practical concerns of women's organizations. Interest in the forthcoming Mid-Decade Conference in Copenhagen was very minimal for all the above reasons.

7. The SL women were very aware of the Manila Conference last February and thought it was useful because of its proximity and its domination by Asian women. There seems to be growing pride in supporting Asian networks and an awareness that there is expertise among Asian women and first priority should be given to utilizing those resources.

8. Among those few leaders that were familiar with the ESCAP women in development network, most regarded it as "all talk or paper and no action".

9. Because of high postage costs, the women's groups do not receive many outside publications - the exceptions being those affliliated with the international groups that have regular newsletters. The International Tribune Newsletter was referred to as the most useful. The SL Women's Conference and Lanka Mahila Samiti were aware of the AID International Directory of Women in Development Organizations.

10. Sri Lanka has two very important and widely read English language newspapers, The Ceylon Daily News and The Sunday Observer. Carol Aloysius, is a news and feature writer for both and does an excellent job on stories about women, their issues and organizations. The major women's groups do use press conferences to promote their concerns.

11. Kantha Handa, is a newly published journal for women produced by an informal group of women academicians and the first ever to be printed in Sinhala. It presents a feminist point of view but is geared to grass roots workers and the Sinhala intelligentsia. The first edition contains articles on 'women and tourism', exploitation of women workers in the free trade zones, women in non-traditional jobs, women in the tea plantations etc. The first edition sold very quickly and the editor, Kumari Jayewardena, said there had been many letters of positive response from women and men throughout the country. This same group is joining with women from other Asian countries to publish an Asian Women's Journal.

12. The leadership of the major women's groups interested in development seem aware of the other development networks within the country such as the FAO - U.N. community, international PVO's and bi-lateral assistance programs such as AID. While they have received some assistance from these groups, they are not very knowledgeable about the range of potential resources available to them. More often, they wait to be approached by these groups feeling insecure and not very knowledgable about how to effectively use these development networks. There is no formal consortium of development organizations in Sri Lanka interested in women in development.

D. Needs for Outside Financial and Technical Assistance

1. All six of the women's groups interested in development do have a history of receiving outside assistance in their programs. Small grants have come from the international affiliates such as World YWCA, the larger grants have come from DANIDA (day care and training for rural women leaders), NOVIB, the Family Planning Association, family life educational projects, (IPPF) and several of the international PVO's such as World Vision, Save the Children Fund, Inter-Church Aid. OEF has funded a survey research project to increase employment opportunities for university graduates. US/AID has apparently not given any significant grants to women's groups for field development projects.

2. The Lanka Mahila Samiti is the only major voluntary women's group which has received government funds for development programs.

3. The Young Women's Muslim Association has received via its (?) "brother" organization, the Young Men's Muslim Association, outside financial assistance from the Middle Eastern governments.

4. All of these groups (and all of the women's organizations) raise their meagre budgets from a combined campaign for annual dues (usually 5-10 rupees a year), fund raising events (raffles, gala's, jumble sales) food fairs and handicraft sales. Income for the major membership organizations has dropped as memberships from younger women have decreased. There is widely expressed despair about financing both organizational operating expenses and project support.

5. "We can't seem to understand what AID wants," "I sent a proposal but never heard from them again", "we don't know how to ask for money", "I didn't know they could give money", "It's difficult for us to write the kind of language they want in the proposal", :Could you help us write a proposal?", "It takes too long". These are the kinds of comments leaders of these groups gave to the question, "What has been your experience in looking for outside assistance?".

6. All of these groups state that outside assistance is absolutely essential if they are to do development programming. They would like to have money, equipment and services from these groups, but, they need help in thinking through a proposal and writing the document. That is the greatest initial barrier to their participation.

7. MANAGEMENT - learning how to run an organization, manage a project, hire a staff, develop financial resources, write a proposal, evaluate a program - these are the skill areas that leaders of these women's groups see as most crucial for their future effectiveness. They have the ideas for projects, are aware of the development needs for women but they are concerned about their lack of expertise in being able to carry out their goals. It is believed that outsiders, maybe American women could be most helpful to them in teaching management skills.

8. INCOME GENERATION. The women's groups involved in development talk about income generation in two ways: a. raising money for general support of their organization and, b. providing training for low income women in skills that are marketable and will in fact generate real income for their families. While almost all of the current so-called 'income generating' projects are either sewing, lace-making or handicrafts, there is growing recognition that programs have got to teach women in non-traditional job skills. There is some current justification to training competency in use of the sewing machine because of the free-trade zone textile industries where poor women can earn relatively higher salaries. However, the threat of exploitation looms in that industry and the women's groups would like to explore other areas for training.

9. Leaders of the Lanka Mahila Samiti have attended leadership development courses in the United States (CEPHA and AHEA gatherings at the 4-H center). Others have attended several U.N. seminars in Nepal, West Africa. Those that belong to the international affiliates, attend workshops associated with biennial meetings. In response to the query, "Were these meetings useful?", most admitted to their personal pleasure but suggested that distance and cost made the prospect of local gatherings or at least Asian regional seminars more valuable.

10. Leaders talked about how helpful it would be to have management training sessions or workshops within the country - perhaps bringing in a few outsiders but making use of resources that were Sri Lankan as much as possible.

11. Those that attended seminars outside the country admitted that follow-up was difficult and others sited lack of accountability as a reason for the uselessness of a few women continually attending the outside international training sessions.

12. The prospect of a management training workshop that included actual proposal development or an actual task assignment with follow-up and evaluation was mentioned by many as being an extremenly useful idea.

13. The leaders felt that using case materials or field examples from their own society or at least the Asian region was much more useful than going to other cultures that were radically different.

14. Sri Lanka based training could also include women of more modest means and rural women.

In summary, leaders of the formal women's groups in Sri Lanka basically want outside assistance that will help them develop greater expertise in managing projects and their own organizations. There is high preference for use of local or regional resources when possible. Local assistance not only means more culturally appropriate training but also increases the opportunities for more women to reap the benefits from such training.

II. Informal Women's Organizations in Sri Lanka: A Profile

Sri Lankan village women are much more likely to have heard about a women's group or a Mother's Club that was linked up to one of the government rural women's development programs or Sarvodaya movement than any of the women in development projects of the formalized, Colombo led women's groups. While there is a formalized scheme for organizing these groups, most of the groups themselves remain very loosely organized networks that are started, function briefly and then disappear. The leadership capacity of the local organizer and what 'rewards' he or she has to offer seem to be determinants in the longevity of the informal groups. There are currently some form of informal women's group activity under the following asupices:

1. Department of Rural Development - Kantha Samitis
2. Farm Women's Extension Service of the Department of Agriculture - Young Farmers Clubs.
3. Sarvodaya Movement[1] - Mother's Clubs in most of the 3000 villages where this village development movement is active.
4. Good Sheperd Sisters Farm Women's Training Program Halgashene, Hanwella.
5. Trade Union movement in the Tea and Rubber Estates
6. Proposed formation of women's groups in Mahaweli Settlement Scheme

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1. The Overseas Development Council has funded for one year the work of an American woman, Joanna Macy, to work with Sarvodaya. She will be vaulable resource on women in Sarvodaya.

1. The Department of Rural Development, Kantha Samitis, are theoretically throughout the Sri Lankan countryside. When various government officials and women's group leaders were asked about their existence, they were discounted as politically inspired organizations that are now under the control of local magistrates. It is alleged that the Kantha Samitis are generally little more than sewing centers promoting traditional skills for women. One village woman said that the girls and women go to the government women's groups because they think they might get a job. Meetings of these groups are held infrequently. Nonetheless, there is potential for development programming in these government sponsored women's groups.

2. The Farm Women's Extension Service of the Dept. of Agriculture headquartered in Kandy is run by a woman who is quite well known in international circles because of her frequent attendance at international meetings. Her department organizes in 12 targeted rural districts Young Farmer's Clubs which often have 50% women in membership. While they are supposed to teach nutrition and agricultural skills, the programs success has been very limited because of such a small staff (only 2 extension workers) and little transportation. FAO provided the original financial support for this program which is now solely but inadequately funded under the government.

3. Sarvodaya Mother's Clubs. A model for basic community development in close to 3000 villages in Sri Lanka. Women's programs come out of this basic organization which the village women organize themselves under leadership from a Sarvodaya organizer. Child care and the development of a day care center for the village women is seen as a first priority. Sarvodaya District centers train village women who are selected by their peers in child care and group leadership. A village day care center is then organized with various programs for the mothers in family life education. Sarvodaya village women share responsibilities in running of the center. Village women are eventually encouraged to develop an income-generating project - usually a product for which the village has a necessity or one that can be marketed in the area i.e. soap, woven material, towels, field wagons. While the Sarvodaya movement historically took a traditional attitude toward the role of women, more progressive attitudes have been articulated in the last several years. A growing number of very able village women have moved up into the ranks of district leadership. 'Women in development' is becoming a more verbalized goal for this remarkable, voluntary organization.

4. The Good Sheperd Farm Center, a project of the Good Shepherd Sisters of the Catholic Church, this program is considered by many to be the best agricultural training program for women in the country. Totally self-sufficient after 5 years of seed grants from the Dutch and German Catholic Churches, the training center trains 70 mostly village girls in dairy, poultry, pig and crop husbandry in 6 month segments. Most girls stay in the program for two years. Upon graduation, they may take a loan of up to 5000 rupees from a revolving fund in order to buy a good livestock. There are regular follow-up visits to the graduates by Sister who is a technical expert. In addition to the residential training program, the Sisters teach local village women seri-culture and allow the men to cultivate the rubber plantation. The cost of the training is fully supported by modest tuition rates and, the sale of eggs and chickens from the farm. The Lanka Mahila Samiti brings its trainees for day trips to the farm but its potential as a training center for other teachers has not been developed. It is the most outstanding training program for village women in Sri Lanka, and one of the best in Asia.

5. There is an organized labor movement in Sri Lanka and one of the targets of their activity has been the exploitation of workers in the tea and rubber estates. There are apparently informal women's groups within this network - some of them organized at the instigation of management, others by trade unionists. The Ceylon Workers Congress has a specific women's program. Large numbers of rural people are employed in these industries and it would be very worthwhile to have more information on the role of women, their organizations and prospects for development within this sector.

6. FAO and The Women's Bureau have prepared a joint project under the Mahaweli development scheme (massive irrigation project) which would promote the role and integration of female settlers in these communities. Self-reliant women's groups in the village would be the basic unit of organization -- an important and valuable network if implemented.

B. Attitudes of Village Women Toward Outside Assistance

An afternoon spent with a group of village women and an interpreter in the Kandy district produced the following comments on their attitudes toward city women who come to help them in the villages.

"These women come and have meetings maybe once a month but nothing ever happens."

"Colombo ladies don't understand about village leadership -- they come to do work that builds their own reputation. It is not work from the heart."

"Colombo ladies look different." The discussion went say that the village women were intimidated by the manner and dress of the city women. These women were good at giving directions but not able to work themselves.

"Colombo ladies can help with their money."

III. Summary: Needs for Outside Assistance by Women's Organizations in Sri Lanka

1. The non-governmental women's organizations are best galvanized in their development activity by other international PVO's. The planned Sri Lanka U.S. AID "PVO Co-Financing Project" might be an ideal resource for assisting these organizations. While the development oriented women's groups need to learn to develop more comprehensive proposals, sums needed are not necessarily large.

2. Management expertise is the most critically needed skill among the women's groups. The leadership of these organizations is becoming increasingly aware of the shortcomings in these areas and correlates future effectivenss in the development arena with their ability to learn project oriented management skills. Very practical, project oriented management training sessions would be extremely valuable to these groups that are making the transition from the more traditional ladies volunteer societies to women's groups that can effectively be involved in national development.

3. While critics will decry the lack of young members in these groups, the major women's organizations in Sri Lanka continue to be led by well-meaning women who are socially and politically prominent and want to provide concrete assistance for their poor countrywomen.

4. Increased management expertise will enhance the effectiveness of these groups to take on projects that can substantially assist women in the poor majority. The priority project interest in INCOME GENERATION. Outside technical assistance can help these groups develop new and perhaps non-traditional job skills for women, particularly those in the urban, shanty areas. For women in the rural areas, women's groups must expand their income generating activity beyond the traditional needlecraft skills. Hard agri-industry skills must be taught so that women have the realistic prospect of increasing marginal family income. It is dishonest to promote lace-making and handicrafts as significant income production for poor women.

5. The Sri Lanka Foundation and possibly the Marga Institute have the facilities and faculties for assisting in training programs for women. Outside consultants could be brought in if necessary but a culturally based program has the potential for greatest impact and economy. Follow-up and evaluation of training - be it in management or income generation or ideally, both, would be both practicable and do-able with programs based in Sri Lanka.

6. The Good Sheperd Farm Center should be encouraged and helped to develop a training program for trainers in agri-industry. It would be an invaluable resource for women's programs in both the private and public sector.

7. Because both the country and the development community are small, it would make good sense to encourage project cooperation among the various PVO's with WID interests together. Modest amounts of money from several sources could go along way with development programs for women.

8. The informal women's organizations - particularly those that cluster under the various government schemes are only going to be affected by outside assistance through large bi-lateral assistance programs. Senior officers in the U.S.AID network must build in women's participation in the major projects such as those that fund the Mahaweli Development Scheme or Jaffna Water Supply project. Women's groups at the village level are a vastly under-utlized human and economic resource in these major technical assistance projects.

9. The Sarvodaya village development organization offers many very interesting opportnities for using informal women's groups as 'vehicles for integrating women in development'. A network of many very skilled village women exists and it ought to be utilized for bringing resources to the poor majority.

WOMEN's ORGANIZATIONS: THAILAND

Formal women's organizations in Thailand are an integral part of a complex social and political structure that impacts on the lives of educated women. With a long history of independence, the strong influence of Buddhism and the presence of a very remarkable and benevolent Royal Family have encouraged in modern Thailand the activity of women in charitable and cultural organizations.

Women's organizations came into being in Thailand not long after the second world war in an effort to reinforce Thai culture after a long period of demoralizing occupation by the Japanese. Thai Women's Cultural Associations were formed to encourage the role of women in public life and to promote traditional Thai culture. The Red Cross organization was also formed about this time.

An American women, Rose Pearson, was actually responsible for encouraging the very popular wife of the then Thai Prime Minister to pull together the almost 70 cultural associations into the National Council of Thai Women. That organization was formed under the patronage of the Royal Family in 1956 and continues to function as the largest "umbrella" organization for women's groups in Thailand. There are currently 32 member organizations in the provinces.

The National Council of Thai Women continues as a very significant organization because of its role as both a coordinating council and operational agency for women in development programs. While the latter function is controversial (some say the Council should stick strictly to coordination and should not engage

in direct programming), the NCTW forthrightly lists development as a goal in its aims and policy statement. It serves as a center for collection and the exchange of information among national and international women's groups, it seeks and allocates funds to assist member organizations involved in community development and the Council is committed to helping member organizations effectively carry out their self-help and welfare programs through training programs, seminars, consultant expertise and workshops carried out at administrative and local levels. With few exceptions, all of the major women's organizations in Thailand belong to the NCTW even though some of them carry on very independent programs.

While many of the national's women's groups perform traditional charitable activities, only a small number are actually engaged in development programs with the rural or urban poor. These groups include the National Council of Thai Women (its operational programs in the provinces), the Girl Guides Association of Thailand, the YWCA, Zonta Club and, the Thai Women's Lawers Association. This assessment of capacities for development and needs for outside assistance among formal women's organizations focused on these organizations. Because of the influence and stature of the leadership of these groups, these organizations serve as very worthwhile models for the other women's groups that are likely to become more involved in development activity.

It is worthwhile to make a few comments on Thai social structure as it relates to women's organizations. The charitable activity of the Royal Family is both extensive and impressive. The Buddhist ethic of "earning merits" is compounded by the rewards offered to Thai women who make major contributions through

leadership in Thai charitable concerns. The title, "Khunying" is conferred on women by the Royal family who have given meritorius service. Only 500 "Khunying" titles have been awarded and it is a designation many seek. The very beautiful and highly revered Queen Sirikit frequently lends her patronage to the formal women's organizations and their programs. Involvement in women's organizations and significant financial contributions to their programs is encouraged by the very distinct status and prospect for reward given to these groups by the Royal Family.

On a more informal level, there is another entire network of women's organizations that are involved in national development in Thailand. The Ministry of Interior, Department of Community Development has had a women's organization division for some time and there have been concerted efforts to organize rural women in the villages for purposes of family life education. The activity and longevity of these groups is very much a function of the particular skills and interest of local community development officers. Predictably, it is a mixed pattern. There are also women's groups within the Accelerated Rural Development Programs and several of the other government programs - health, credit, home economics.

More informal women's groups and programs exist within the private sector. One of Asia's most successful community based family planning organizations, "The Mechai Group" is beginning to work with village women in appropriate technology and income generation. Catholic Relief Services finances a superb rural development program, The Chom Bung Resettlement Project, that has done remarkable work with women in informal groups. Peace Corps volunteers are also working with informal groups of women throughout rural Thailand. It is important to note there is a remarkable degree of cooperation between the public and private programs working

with poor women.

While the government of Thailand at an official level has been accused of giving only secondary interest to women in development programs, there is a significant amount of interest and activity in the private sector. The following pages outline particular characteristics of these programs, perceptions of the leadership about the problems, barriers to success and, the needs for outside assistance.

I. Formal Women's Organizations: A Profile

A. A Profile of the Leadership and Membership

1. The leadership of the formalized women's organizations is almost exclusively middle and upper class, primarily middle aged and older, urban and educated. Socially prominent women and especially members of the Royal Family add prestige to women's organizations.

2. The Governor's wife is automatically president of the province Women's Cultural Association (branch of NCTW) and the Red Cross. Membership by the wives of the provincial male officials becomes obligatory and adds a heavy social component to the organization. The Red Cross frequently commands the most attention of the Governor's wives, distracting energies from the development of programs for women.

3. The fact that the governor's wives are provincial chairs makes leadership at that level difficult because the governors are moved every four years and may be people from a very different region of Thailand.

4. When the governor's wife decides to become active in working on women's programs at the provincial level, the results can be very impressive. Governors wives in Cha Cheong Sao and Udon are considered to be responsible for excellent development programs for women in their provinces.

5. The elected leadership of the organizations is voluntary and these women spend close to full time in these positions. The YWCA, Girl Guides and NCTW have paid staff people but their authority is very dependent on the guidance of the elected leadership. The Girl Guides has the most professional staff, several of whom have rather extensive responsibilities in managing training programs.

6. Many of the leaders of these groups have had positions of responsibility for some time and over the years have participated in various leadership training courses. Some have been to international seminars, others more short-term workshops that have taken place in Bangkok. One very respected and prominent leader said, "We've had too much leadership training. There are too many leaders and not enough managers!"

7. Most authority seems concentrated in the hands of a few. It is informally understood that in each of these organizations there is one particularily powerful woman who sometimes is the president of the organization, other times, she is a power behind the throne .. someone who once may have served as an elected leader.

8. Some of the younger women candidly complain that the traditional leaders don't delegate authority and they feel this is a reason for relatively few young women entering the leadership circles.

9. Membership is also down in the voluntary organizations because younger city women have less interest in voluntarism, are more apt to be interested in paid employment and care less about the social aspects of group membership.

10. The Thai women have especially good skills in fund-raising and are famous for their financially successful galas, lunches, fairs, etc. It is not uncommon to see a rather modest, charitable group holding a lunch at the fanciest hotel in Bangkok. Royal patronage by the Queen at a fund-raising event can mean a very high net for the organization. It is customary however, for the Queen to ask for half of the proceeds to go to her own private charity such as the Handicrafts Foundation. Even so, groups earnestly seek the patronage of the Queen.

11. While event fund-raising is done with great flair, the leadership is remarkably unskilled in overall financial development. Many worry deeply about meeting organizational costs and operate their projects on small budgets.

12. The Girl Guides are exceptions to this - they have a very impressive national facility that is funded through hostel fees, a cafeteria, craft sales (they even weave material for all Thai Girl Guide uniforms) and a swimming pool. Their most prominent leader has been extremely skillful in getting outside grants from Japan, the U.S., Denmark, and Norway,

13. International Women's Year was also a great boost to development programming within the women's organizations. The YWCA was traditionally the only group involved in social action with poor and rural women but in recent years, other groups have made development a stated goal of their organization.

14. Women's rights as a project area is also becoming more acceptable. The Thai Women Lawyers Association, a rather traditional group has recently undertaken a project to educate rural women about their rights under the new Family Law which was passed several years ago.

15. It was notable that many of the leaders and board members talked about the importance of more women getting involved in public policy. Several of the very prominentand respected leaders suggested that political activity might become the best way for educated women to help out their poorer sisters. There has been little support in public policy arenas for some of the issues that activist women see as essential for improving the status of women within the country.

B. Program Characteristics

1. Training of rural women in 'family life education' - health nutrition, child care, sewing and possibly family planning is the basic mainstay of the program for both rural and urban poor women.

2. In most instances, village girls are selected for training courses that vary from two weeks to three months and then they return to the village and, under rather minimal supervision, train their peers in the skills they have learned. Sewing - learning to sew personal clothing receives major emphasis.

3. The Girl Guides have developed this model in a very sophisticated fashion. Interestingly enough, the Girl Guides separate the village training program from their other arm which exclusively recruits young girls to be Girl Guides. The Girl Guides with the financial assistance of a number of international organization has a regional training center and perhaps the best and most professional staff of any women's organization in Thailand (and probably Asia). Girls and young men as well, are trained in leadership development as well as the 'family life skills". The first training cycle takes place in the village and then the best two are sent away for more intensive training. The third phase involves the return of the trainees to the village where they set up their own program under the supervision of experienced field staff. There is more follow-up in this program than in any other.

4. The NCTW has given particular emphasis to training village women in handicraft production and it is considered income generation. Thailand has a prosperous tourist industry and highly sophisticated crafts trade but the great bulk of it is under commercial asupices. The Queen has given her energy to a foundation that supports the production of traditional crafts and her travels into the rural areas to encourage rural women in this production are highly publicized. It is difficult to obtain very accurate estimates on the actual amounts of money made in these ventures. One suspects it is small. A number of women spoke about how difficult it is to market the crafts and how much they needed help in this area. Crafts are presumed to be a viable way for rural women to earn extra money outside of the planting season. Because of the Queen's interest, handicraft producation is highly sanctioned but the economic return for poor women seems very negigible.

5. The YWCA of Thailand has essentially two separate organizations: the prosperous socially active Bangkok Y which runs a business school, recreational programs etc., and the struggling and newly developing nationa Y. The latter is almost single-handedly run by a tireless Y crusader, Mrs. Boonchuan. With very minimal financial support, she has initiated several village sewing and family life education projects for young girls. The national Y under Mrs. Boonchuan's leadership was the only Thai PVO with activity in the refugee camps as of late August 1979. With begged and borrowed sewing machines and a few modestly paid teachers, she has organized for overflow crowds, handicraft, sewing and tailoring classes and a school for 200 children. She would like the national Y to take a much stronger role in regional and rural development programs for the poor.

6. Child care centers for rural women is seen as another priority program among the organized women's groups. While its success is largely tied up with the charismatic leadership of a particular governor's wife, the NCTW cultural association in Cha Cheong Sao province is largely responsible for organizing 15 child care centers throughout the province. Village girls are trained at the province teacher's college with assistance from the provincial community development department. Mothers of children in the day care centers are given some training in nutrition and sewing. A seri-culture project was started but failed. The strong leadership of the governor's wife and her authority seemed to be the major ingredient for success.

7. The Zonta Club of Bangkok has no regular program of development activity but made a major and extremely successful contribution of 40 cows to a village re-settlement project. Several years later, over 400 healthy cows thrive in this project area. It was a superb example of a useful development project for a group of sophisticated city ladies. The "match" occured because the Catholic nun, who is the head of the rural project, once taught at a famous Bangkok girls school.

8. The development projects of the NCTW and the Y are usually run by voluntary leadership. There is little concept of a 'project director' and caste and class differences are very apparent when the city ladies go to the rural project centers. Lectures by the city ladies on etiquet seem to be an inescapable part of the program for village women.

9. The Thai women seem very willing to make use of their political connections when traveling to the rural areas. It is commonplace for a routine call to be made on the governor who is a key person in assuring the services and assistance of the provincial community development or agricultural extension agency.

10. Most of the women's group development projects receive in kind assistance from one or more of the many government development agencies. Assistance is mostly in the form of personnel or use of resources such as rural training facilities. There was little evidence of any financial assistance. One very senior government official in the development arena (a woman) said that government officials don't take the women's groups seriously. "It is laughable to think the Bangkok ladies can do useful work with the poor women". But, another less prominent official said, "The government has the field personnel, the CD workers and the women's groups have the money".

11. While some of the leaders speak about the need for more real income generating training for poor women, none of the women's groups have a major program in agri-industry or non-traditional jobs skills for women.

C. Networks Among the Formal Women's Organizations

1. The National Council of Thai women has been an important network for the formal Thai women's organizations. New leaders and a new executive council are elected every two years and these changes in leadership apparently bring a somewhat different character to the Council. The immediate predecessor of the current leader is said to have brought the most serious "development" orientation to the Council in its history. Development issues were raised, forums held, speakers brought in and there were many personal and group exchanges with other international women's organizations. The NCTW took initiative in directly managing several development projects during that time. A study done in three rural provinces about the status of Thai women was considered a very useful and important project. At the same time, there has been criticism of the "project role" for the organization and there are newer leaders who are determined to strengthen the council function of the organizations. This means the NCTW should be doing more to strengthen the organizational and development capacities of the organizations: an important area for building the effectiveness of these groups in development programming.

2. The major women's groups belong to international affiliates like the International Alliance for Women, the International Council for Women and, The Associated Country Women of the World. Virtually every international professional organization for women has a counterpart in Thailand.

3. Many of the leaders of these groups have the personal means to travel to the international meetings.

4. The official delegations to the U.N. meetings are made up of the predictably prominent women but there was great pride that two of the women in the delegation to the Manila meeting were modest women from the provinces.

5. Some outsiders suggest that the Thai women's groups and their leadership are extremely competitive and 'turf' conscious. While the NCTW appears to be an amicable forum of women's organizations, there are deep personal and social rivalries that prohibit these groups from truly working with each other.

6. There is growing pride among Asian women in their expertise in working in development. The highly respected leader of the Girl Guides told how she argued with the international Girl Guides network about 3-4 years ago her intent to set up a development program for rural poor girls that would not have a relationship to the recruitment of Girl Guides. She recalls their disapproval and now feels vindicated as she has earned much international respect for bringing the Girl Guides into a respected role in the national development of Thailand. "We led the way and now Girl Guides in other countries are coming to us to learn".

7. The formal women's groups have little to do with the Asian ESCAP network even though it has been located in Bangkok for the last year.

8. Meetings with other Asian women in Malaysia, Sri Lanka and the recent gatherings in Manila make sense to the Thai women. They feel most in common with women from their region.

9. International Women's Year was seen as a very galvanizing period for women's organizations in Thailand - it supported the earnestness of their interest in becoming involved in national development and served to encourage a small but effective women's rights network. There is little interest in the Mid Decade Conference in Copenhagen and less faith that it will be useful. However, one very senior woman did say that there would be value in attendance IF there were workshop sessions that dealt with the real organizational and development project concerns of women's organizations. She hoped there might be funds made available so representative delegations could be sent to Copenhagen. Management and income generation were the two topics she thought would be most useful.

10. The non-governmental women's network seems to have very little association with those women who are a part of official Thai Government women and development programs. The women's group network seems to have a much high social component. In early September ILO sponsored a major workshop on income generation for rural women in Chiang Mai. The list of attendees did not include one woman from the private sector (although there were private sector women from other countries). Knowledge about this meeting was not very widespread.

11. The International Tribune Newsletter is rather well-known and liked among the women's group leadership.

D. Needs for Outside Financial and Technical Assistance

1. Thailand is the center of a greal deal of development activity with bi-lateral and PVO technical assistance coming in from all the major international resources. The Girl Guides have been especially skillful in getting support from these agencies and have learned to develop long-range comprehensive funding proposals. They are envied by the other groups for this expertise - largely the work of their most prominent leader.

2. The YWCA and other groups that have international affiliates receive modest project assistance from outside sources.

3. The Girl Guides have also been very successful in creating a very large and active national headquarters that earns enough income from its hostel, cafeteria and so forth to support the general operating costs of the organization.

4. With the exception of the Girl Guides, the other women's groups worry about the general support for their organizations and while they have major fund-raising events from time to time, they do not adequately build budgets that support operating expenses.

5. There have been leadership training seminars for the women's groups, the most recent a week long meeting sponsored by the NCTW with the assistance of the Denver Group, an American consulting firm. This was considered to have been the most useful of recent meetings because it was small and made use of small group techniques instead of formal speeches.

6. The need for management skills is repeated over and over and most of the women feel this is an area in which they could learn jointly. Several said, "we have too many leaders and not enough managers". Very nuts and bolts skills are needed in such areas as developing an organizational budget, building competence and accountability in leaders and among the staff, how to run meetings, etc. One very respected woman said, "We need participatory training instead of leadership training. We must learn how to work together".

7. The Thai women have had many outsiders come to them or they have gone outside. A number now say that training is most useful if the materials, case studies and leadership are appropriate and specific to Thailand. They believe that expertise even in management can be found among Thai's. Even with the Denver Group, there was some voiced resentment about the leadership roles given to women from outside the country.

8. Those groups that are involved in handicraft production want help in marketing. Despite the enormity of the Thai commercial crafts industry, the women's groups are notably naive about their potential to compete profitably in the open market.

9. The women's groups would like to learn more about training poor women in other kinds of income generating activity. The traditional emphasis on crafts and needlework has a limited future - and these women want help in breaking through to other kinds of income generating skills for women.

II. Informal Women's Organizations in Thailand: A Profile

Some of the most important work by and for the women of Thailand is being done by individuals or groups that would not be identified as 'women in development' programs or certainly, as formalized women's groups. One of the most impressive projects in the region is a rural resettlement project near the Burmese border run by a Catholic nun. A once totally desolate and abandoned area, it now contains five villages with some several hundred families. Women along side the men have been taught improved agricultural methods, have learned to breed poultry and raise improved breeds of cattle. Women harvest special strains of rice and other diversified crops. Additionally, mother's clubs exist within the resettlement area and have been very active learning centers in health, nutrition, and the basic family life education skills. Support for this project has been painstakingly brought in from Thai government ministries, Catholic Relief Services, the Zonta Club of Bangkok and individuals. It is a women in development project in the best sense based on the needs and participation of informal networks of women and led by a remarkable woman. It is a model that should be closely studied, supported and promoted.

1. The Thai government has many official development programs but coordination is illusive and it is difficult to quickly learn how many agencies have official women's programs. The Ministry of Interior has an active women and development program with networks of rural women's groups in much of the Thai countryside. Its purpose is to encourage women's participation in planning and development in their communities. Rural women selected by provincial CD officers are brought to regional centers for 10 day training courses - a rather complex program that was funded by FAO. The trained village women are required to work with the other women in the village and are encouraged to become a part of the village community development committee.

2. The major emphasis in the recent village women training programs has been in income generation: weaving, food preservation, sewing and handicrafts.

3. FAO funded a study of income generation activity among village women. A very interesting preliminary report, Survey of Problems and Needs of Rural Women in Thailand was issued by the Department of Community Development, Ministry of Interior, August 15, 1978.[1] It is a very important profile of rural women in Thailand and in regards to income generation, the survey revealed that village women overwhelmingly want training in agricultural skills, not handicrafts.

4. The well-known and successful private Community Based Family Planning Services organization has recently hired a very respected Thai woman as deputy director to purposely strengthen the organizations program with women at both a training and field level. Informal groups of village women who are successful family planning acceptors are being given baby pigs as rewards and are being trained in pig production for income generation. This organization with monitored activity in 16,000 Thai villages (a paid staff of 300) is conscientously trying to build women in development programs with informal networks of village women. Appropriately technology and income generation are fundamental interests in this major organization.

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1. Full report is contained in Appendix

5. The Good Sheperd Sisters run a very fine training program for poor Thai women in one of the urban slum areas in Bangkok. Originally organized to provide other options for rural young women who flock to the city and become prostitutes because of economic pressure, The Fatima Center provides a rigorous training program in family life education and income generation. The sewing program is actually profitable because the Sisters have marketed ties and clothing made by the women to boutiques in Tahiti and Germany!

III. Summary: Needs for Outside Assistance by Women's Organizations in Thailand

1. Non-governmental women's organizations are a prominent network in the lives of educated urban Thai women and will continue to become more substantively involved in issues on national development. The leadership seems genuinely interested in building their own expertise and there is some awareness that more democratic and management oriented leadership patterns will be essential if younger women are to be brought it.

2. Many of the leaders speak very sincerely about wanting to become better managers, to learn how to manage an organization, develop a budget and to learn to plan and evaluate. Long experience with outside groups has led to some skepticism however about the helpfulness of outsiders being the exclusive teachers of this kind of information. There is growing preference for support of Asian or Thai institutions.

3. There is an excellent institution, the Asian Center for Population and Community Development, directed by Dr. Malee Sundhagel, that has just gotten underway this year and it offers great promise as a management and project development center for women leaders and their organizations. A group of women from Bangladesh have just completed a program with the center and their experience should be a useful guideline for considering future use of the center. Grants for specific women's organizations to send leaders to this training center might be a very timely and useful project.

4. The women's organizations need assistance on an individual basis in developing projects for funding by outside agencies. One very widely publicized and somewhat controversial women's project funded by an American PVO is very likely to fail because no one insisted that a full-time project director be funded under the proposal. Its failure is likely to lead to the inevitable, "women just don't know how to manage" comments that weakens the position of all the women's groups.

5. Several of the major women's organizations involved in development have the capacity to undertake income generation skill training in a much more comprehensive wa Encouragement should be given to projects that make agri-industry skills the focus and not sewing and handicrafts. Research indicates that the Thai village women strongly prefer and need the former.

6. PVO's active in Thailand should be encouraged to support women in development activity through their existing networks. The Chom Bung Rural Development project is an excellent model for such assistance.

7. Women's organizations - formal and informal would benefit from specific information on outside funding sources. Most groups are not very knowledgable about these resources and more so, they need specific help in learning how to develop and write comprehensive proposals.

8. Thai women have begun to make the connections between government support for women's concerns and the role of women in public policy. Outside agencies can assist Thai women in meeting women from other countries who are active in public life.

IV. Factors That Will Enhance the Capacity of AID Missions to Respond Effectively to Women's Organizations and Development

1. AID Women in Development program officers should be encouraged to help women's organizations and individuals with good ideas to get their proposals through the process. The biggest problem seems to be in actually getting a well written proposal in. Perhaps proposal writing workshops could be offered through the "umbrella" women's organizations.

2. Women consultants seem to have been too infrequent in the field, particularily consultants who have pragmatic, project oriented experience in women's or public interest institutions. Communication, funding plans, exhange of ideas, exploration of solutions, brokering of ideas and resources between institutions needs to take place and women consultants can affirm AID's poistion in supporting women in development activity.

3. The AID women in development offices also have a potentially very useful role in brokering good projects with other organizations interested in WID. Informal group meetings with other PVO's and agencies concerned about women in development might be very useful in making good use of scarce resources. Local officers and project people should actively participate in the networks of the women's community.

4. AID's role in supporting the integration of more women into national development can be strengthened by its use of indigenous institutions and resources for training and project management. Outside consultants brought in should primarily have supplementary or advisory roles.

5. It is in the interest of all mission AID staff to be given the opportunity to understand women in development as a process, not just a tightly boxed package of technical skills. Training at an attitudinal level for AID staff might be a very worthwhile effort.

V. Conclusions and Related Issues

1. Women in development program officers in the field very much need on-going support, philosophically and operationally from the Washington AID/WID office. The WID officers are overwhelmed with other responsibilities, do not have very much authority in the AID 'peckingorder' and, bring varying levels of professional experience to the job. The WID office might consider WID training sessions especially geared to WID field program officers. They need help in developing strong and useful programs in a project area that is widely misunderstood.

2. Since management is such a major need among women's organizations (and apparently among all PVO's) the Washington WID office might consider giving WID field officers specific skill support (via seminars, workshops or consultants) in this area. It is a major challenge in their jobs to get women's groups to develop comprehensive and well done proposals that will survive the bureaucratic funding process.

3. The WID program officers would ideally like to have access to WID project funds. It is perceived that the Washington office has the potential to give direct project assistance via the WID field program officer. The WID officers feel their hands would be strengthened significantly by such an arrangement.

4. The International Directory of Women's Organizations has been a very useful document for the field staff. It's utility would be even greater if it was produced regionally in loose-leaf notebook style. There is considerable interest throughout Asia in seeing such a directory printed. It was also recommended that local women be asked to assist in collecting the information on women's groups so that accuracy could be assured.

5. Since many of the non-governmental women's groups have U.S. counterparts, it would seem particularily productive for Washington AID/WID to continue its liason with U.S. women's organizations. There is much potential for AID to serve a useful role in brokering more financial and institutional support for women in development field projects from U.S. counterpart organizations such as the Zonta Club, Soroptimists, the YWCA, etc.

6. Washington AID/WID can assist the field program officers in their work with women's organizations and development by sending more project-oriented consultants who bring special skills in organizational management to the field. Researchers and technical specialists have dominated the field traditionally.

7. Washington AID/WID should participate actively in the planning for the Mid-Decade U.N. Conference in Copenhagen. The funding of practical "how-to" workshops in management and project development would be received as a very substantive and useful tool for women in Asia. Such support would help to neutralize the potential for politicization at the U.N. meeting. A program that was geared to building skills in women's organizations, their leadership and thus their potential for effective participation in national development would augur well for AID and its commitment to women in development.

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